

PERSONAL TECH

Quicker Ways to Digitize Old Photographs

AUG. 15, 2014

Q&A

By J. D. BIERSDORFER

Q. *Flatbed scanners are good but can be slow and bulky. Are there any such things as photo scanners with automatic feeders, or a faster way to scan many prints without paying someone else to do it?*

A. Flatbed scanners are not the only option for converting prints to digital files. Depending on your resources, quicker methods may be available. For instance, Kodak's Picture Saver Scanning System uses sheet-fed scanners and software to digitize 50 to 85 photos a minute for high-volume conversion. It is not inexpensive, however: The basic scanner hardware alone costs more than \$1,600.

The Fujitsu SnapScan iX500 scanner is a less expensive alternative, at \$500, and reviewers of the product say they have scanned photos without damaging the prints. While automatic document-feeder attachments are also available for some consumer scanner models, if you are shopping for one, check the specifications to make sure photographs are acceptable, as some feeders intended for plain paper may bend, curl or otherwise harm photo prints.

Portable photo scanners can make the digital conversion process a bit more mobile if you do not want to be chained to a flatbed scanner at your desk. Consumer Reports recently reviewed several models. If the quality of a portable scanner does not suit you and you are stuck with a flatbed model, you may be able to shorten your overall scanning time by placing multiple photos on the glass, and then separating the large scan into individual pictures again with image-editing software on the computer.

Another conversion technique skips the scanner entirely. If you have a good digital

camera and a well-lit place to work, it may be possible simply to photograph your old prints with your camera and then load the pictures of your photos onto a computer or tablet for any necessary cropping and touch-up work.

Consolidating Online Address Books

Q. *I'm tired of checking multiple accounts and want to get rid of my Yahoo Mail account. Can I import the address book from it into Outlook.com contacts?*

A. You can import your Yahoo Mail contacts — and even all of the mail from the account — into an Outlook.com account. Last spring, Microsoft announced it was adding the ability for Outlook.com users to pull in and manage messages from mail providers that use the IMAP standard, like Yahoo Mail.

You can find the full step-by-step instructions for merging your Yahoo Mail account into Outlook.com, including Yahoo contacts, on Microsoft's support site. (Outlook.com can also manage mail accounts from other services like Gmail or providers using the older POP standard.)

If you want to retire the Yahoo Mail account entirely and just salvage the address book, log into your Outlook.com account and click the menu arrow in the top left corner. On the next screen, click the People icon. In the area marked "Add people to your contact list," click the Yahoo icon. A window pops up, asking you to authorize access to your Yahoo Contacts. Once you do and log in, Outlook.com can then go into the contacts from your Yahoo account and store them.

If you do not want to authorize access to your Yahoo account, you can instead log into Yahoo and export the Yahoo contacts to a common format like a comma separated values (.csv) file. Once the file is on your computer, you can then import it into your Outlook.com account.

Personalized Shopping Options From a Keyboardthis doesn't need to be the hed. But it should carry enough info so that there is no need for an intro line or subhead.

Birchbox

Birchbox.com

A beauty product subscription service started in 2010 that delivers boxes of samples. New customers fill out a survey so that products are customized to their skin, hair, age and other factors. A women's box is \$10 a month and a men's box is \$20. Members can buy full-size products from the site.

Club W

ClubW.com

A subscription wine club that delivers monthly selections at a relatively low price: three bottles of wine for \$45 a month. New customers fill out a six-question “palate profile” that includes questions like, “how do you like your coffee?” or “Do you like citrus?” Customers can review wines to help refine the selection.

Stitch Fix

StitchFix.com

A combination of computers and human stylists choose a personalized box of clothes for female-only customers. Customers fill out a detailed style profile when they sign up and then receive an order every month for or bi-monthly. Prices vary depending on items included, but average about \$50 to \$55. An order contains five items of clothing or accessories, and postage-paid return packaging.

Trunk Club

TrunkClub.com

A high-end personal stylist service for men. Customers work directly with a stylist who asks for their measurements, discusses style options and then chooses a personalized box of clothing. They pay for only what they keep. Shirts generally cost \$100 to \$200, jeans are \$170 to \$250 for denim and sweaters are \$100 to \$300 for sweaters.

MTailor

MTailor.com

A digital tailor that makes custom shirts for men. Customers use an iPhone or iPad camera to digitally take measurements, and then can customize shirts by collar, cuff, fabric and whether they want to wear the shirt tucked or untucked. Shirts start at \$69 and the company will replace shirts free if they don’t fit.

True & Co

TrueandCo.com

A service that finds or makes custom-fit bras. New customers fill out a detailed and are categorized into one of several fit types. The site then displays items customized

for that type. Customers can order a box of up to four bras to try on at home, with free returns. Bra prices vary but hover around \$50 and customers are charged \$20 if they don't provide feedback on the items they received.

© 2014 The New York Times Company